



October 31, 2003

Providence man is sentenced to seven years for firearms trafficking offenses

Oyan Thornton, a felon, used a straw-buyer to purchase guns for him

A federal judge today sentenced **Oyan Thornton**, of Providence, to 84 months in federal prison for illegally purchasing firearms. In September, Thornton admitted using a "straw-buyer" to purchase guns for him because Thornton, a felon, could not legally buy guns himself. The straw-buyer, **Elvin Hasty, III**, also of Providence, has admitted buying guns for Thornton and other Providence drug dealers in exchange for crack cocaine.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi imposed today in U.S. District Court, Providence.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

The charges against Thornton and Hasty resulted from an investigation by **Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives**, which was conducted as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes.

In August, Thornton pleaded guilty to four federal firearms offenses. Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose said at the plea hearing that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, between March and May of this year, Hasty bought five handguns from a licensed firearms dealer, representing himself on purchase applications as the buyer of the guns. However, Hasty was actually buying the guns for Thornton, who supplied him with the money to pay for the guns and gave him crack cocaine in exchange for posing as the purchaser.

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Typically, Thornton would accompany Hasty to the gun shop, D& L Shooting Supplies in Warwick, and indicate the guns that he wanted. Hasty would then fill out a purchase application and identify himself as the purchaser.

At his plea hearing, Hasty admitted that, in addition to the guns he bought for Hasty, between 1999 and 2003 he bought ten other handguns for Providence drug dealers, trading the guns for quantities of crack cocaine.

Thornton, also known as “Cash,” 29, of 174 Alston Street, 2nd floor, pleaded guilty to conspiracy, aiding and abetting Hasty in providing false information on an application to purchase a firearm, and two counts of being a felon in possession of firearms. Hasty, 42, who is also known as “Sonny,” of 44 Pembroke Avenue, pleaded guilty to conspiracy and providing false information on an application to purchase a firearm. He is detained pending sentencing, which is scheduled for December 12.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Rose is prosecuting the case for the government. **ATF** and the **Providence Police Department** investigated the case.

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